

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Wholesale Florists Exchange

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 1313 West Randolph Street

city or town Chicago

state Illinois code IL county Cook code 05 zip code 60607

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet \_\_\_ National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet \_\_\_ the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | private          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Local   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - State   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Federal |

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | district    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | site        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | object      |

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |              |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1            | 0               | buildings    |
| 0            | 0               | district     |
| 0            | 0               | site         |
| 0            | 0               | structure    |
| 0            | 0               | object       |
| 1            | 0               | <b>Total</b> |

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store/wholesale  
market

**Functions**

**Current**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

**Functions**

## 7. Description

**Architectural**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/ Art Deco

**Classification**

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Concrete, brick

roof: Asphalt, gravel

other:

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### *Summary Paragraph*

The Wholesale Florists Exchange, located at 1313 West Randolph Street in the Near West Side neighborhood of Chicago, is a three-story rectangular reinforced concrete loft building designed by the Chicago architectural firm of Fox & Fox and completed in 1927. The building features distinctive cast-in-place concrete facades decorated with abstracted Art Deco-style floral motifs, including prominent ribbed concrete piers with lotus capitals. The main entrance to the building is located at the center of the primary north elevation, set within a projecting bay that rises to an open tower above the roofline. The building is regularly fenestrated primarily with groupings of one-over-one replacement windows within the original openings. The ground level storefronts have been infilled with glass block within the original openings.

On the interior, the ground floor lobby retains plaster detailing on the walls and ceiling, as well as original elevators with ornamental wood and glass doors and decorated metal cabs. Large retail spaces on either side of the lobby are open and utilitarian, with exposed concrete mushroom columns, concrete floors, and concrete ceilings. The upper floors feature double-loaded corridors opening onto utilitarian tenant spaces with exposed structural elements. The building was constructed by the First Realty Company to consolidate the city's largest and most successful wholesale floral concerns, and its completion inaugurated a mass migration of Chicago's florist market from the Loop to the Near West Side during the late 1920s.

#### *Setting and Site*

The Near West Side community, located approximately two miles west of the Chicago Loop, was first settled in the mid-1800s as an elite refuge for wealthy residents, centered on the resort areas of Jefferson Park and Union Park. By the 1870s, the area had begun to transition, with middle-class residential communities divided along ethnic, economic, and racial lines established on the south side and a mixture of wholesale trade businesses (primarily meat packing, florists, and grocers) and manufacturers on the north side, concentrated in an east-west axis along Randolph Street. Today, the area immediately surrounding the Wholesale Florists Exchange is primarily filled with small-scale commercial storefronts and industrial loft buildings, many of which have been converted to condominiums, mixed with new construction. The Wholesale Florists Exchange is located on the southwest corner of West Randolph Street and North Elizabeth Street.

The building's primary entrance faces north onto Randolph Street. A secondary entrance at the center of the Elizabeth Street façade provides access into east retail space and the basement of the building. Immediately west of the building is an adjacent one-story brick structure. The secondary south elevation fronts onto the alley that runs behind the building.

#### *Structure*

The Wholesale Florists Exchange is a three-story concrete and masonry building set on a raised basement, with concrete walls and cast concrete ornamentation on the primary east and north elevations, and unadorned brick and concrete walls on the secondary south and west elevations. The building has a rectangular footprint. Roofs are flat and are covered with bitumen roofing material and gravel. A head house projects from the center of the roof, marking the location of the primary interior stair, and a projecting concrete tower structure on the north end of the roof marks the location of the primary entrance on the north elevation. The building utilizes the flat-slab method of reinforced concrete construction, with flared "mushroom" columns supporting poured

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concrete floors. The building houses one primary enclosed stair located near the center of the building. Two secondary stairs—one in the lobby, and a second on the east end of the building—provide access to the basement. All three stairs feature simple metal newel posts and balustrades. The building contains two passenger elevators with ornamented metal cabs and decorative wood and glass doors at the south end of the lobby corridor. Two freight elevators are located directly south of the passenger elevators. The building also has four metal fire escapes, two on the north elevation and two on the secondary south elevation.

### *Exterior*

The Wholesale Florist Exchange's two primary street-facing elevations—fronting north onto West Randolph Street and east onto Elizabeth Street—feature large window bays framed by a system of cast concrete piers and cast concrete spandrel panels decorated with abstracted Art Deco-style floral motifs. The ribbed concrete piers terminate in a flared lotus flower design at the cornice line. A neighboring one-story structure abuts the building's west elevation, and the south elevation facing the alley features common brick infill between the exposed concrete structural elements. The primary north elevation features a center tower and corner towers with Art Deco-style detailing. All exposed elevations are regularly fenestrated with rectangular window openings in each bay. On the north and east elevations, the upper floor window openings hold groupings of non-historic one-over-one aluminum windows. At the ground floor level, the original storefront openings are infilled with glass block. The primary entrance into the building is located at the center bay of the north elevation and features a simple recessed arched opening at ground level fitted with a non-historic metal and glass door.

### *Interior*

On the interior, the first floor houses open industrial spaces on either side of the central corridor. The corridor connects the small entrance vestibule at the north center entrance to the elevators and enclosed main stair near the back of the building. These entrance spaces are decorated with plaster floral motifs on the walls and ceiling. In keeping with its original use as a wholesale market with a variety of tenants, the upper floors are utilitarian with simple, unornamented tenant spaces opening off of a central double-loaded corridor. The interiors on all floors feature exposed concrete columns and floors with plastered masonry partition walls.

The basement of the building is also primarily open space with exposed columns, and currently houses only the building's mechanical equipment and heating systems.

### *Integrity*

Overall, the building retains a high degree of interior and exterior integrity, with no major non-historic additions or non-reversible alterations. The original multi-light steel sash windows on the upper floor levels have been replaced with non-historic aluminum windows within the original openings and the original main entrance door has been replaced with a non-historic metal and glass assembly within the original opening. The ground floor window openings on the primary elevations have been infilled with glass block, but the infill is contained within the original openings.

On the interior, the plan of the first floor is largely intact, along with the decorative plaster floral details of the small entrance vestibule and the corridor leading to the rear elevators and enclosed stair. The building's two elevators also feature original metal and frosted glass doors on each floor. On the upper floors, the building remains largely as it was when it opened—historic wood and frosted glass double doors with frosted glass transoms line the north and south walls of the central double-loaded corridor, leading into simple tenant spaces partitioned with plastered masonry walls. The full ceiling height of the corridors is currently obscured by a dropped ceiling system.

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The cumulative effect of these minor alterations does not impact the overall architectural integrity of the building and its ability to convey its original function as the center of the West Side floral market in Chicago and as an early example of a cast-in-place concrete structure with concrete facades in the city.



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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1927-1960

### Significant Dates

1927

### Significant

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

### Person

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

Fox & Fox

### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins at the date of the building's completion in 1927 and ends at 1960, the 50-year cut off for National Register listing, because the building continued to serve as a center for wholesale florists through the 1970s.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Wholesale Florist Exchange at 1313 West Randolph Street in Chicago meets National Register Criteria A local significance for Commerce as a reflection of the development of one of the nation's largest wholesale florist markets in the early twentieth century. The building consolidated the largest and most prominent of the city's wholesale florists into a single location and shifted the center of the trade from the Loop to the near West Side. The Wholesale Florist Exchange is also locally significant under Criterion C for architecture as an excellent example of an Art Deco concrete loft structure in the city. Fox & Fox's design for the building capitalized on both the structural and the decorative capabilities of concrete, with a flat-slab concrete structural system and fanciful Art Deco-style facades rendered entirely in cast concrete.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Wholesale Florist Exchange, constructed in 1927, is locally significant under National Register Criterion A as a reflection of the development of Chicago's burgeoning wholesale florist industry, which grew to be the largest in the nation by the early 1900s. Early boosters had dubbed Chicago a city in the garden, "Urbs in Horto," and by the early 1900s the city had become a recognized center for the production and distribution of cut flowers. Hundreds of acres of greenhouses and truck farms on the edges of the city provided flowers that were then routed through the wholesale florists in Chicago and distributed via the city's unparalleled transportation system to cities and towns across the country. The Wholesale Florist Exchange consolidated the largest and most prominent of the city's wholesale florists into a single location and shifted the center of the trade from the Loop to the near West Side. The building, designed and purpose-built for the trade, provided modern solutions to the problems that had plagued the old and congested floral market at Randolph and Wabash Streets.

The Wholesale Florist Exchange is also locally significant under Criterion C for engineering as one of the finest and earliest examples of a cast-in-place concrete loft structure with cast concrete primary elevations in the city. Concrete loft buildings began appearing in Chicago around the turn of the century, but early examples masked the innovative structural system with more traditional brick or stone facades and classical revival style detailing. The Wholesale Florist Exchange, designed by the Chicago architectural firm of Fox & Fox, who were best-known at the time for their designs of automobile garages and industrial buildings, fully explored both the structural and the decorative capabilities of the new building material. The building's fanciful Art Deco-style primary facades were rendered entirely in concrete, with floral detailing that served as an advertisement for the building's original occupants.

### *The Wholesale Florist Trade in Chicago*

In the hundred years between Chicago's incorporation in 1833 and the Century of Progress World's Fair in 1933, the city transformed from a muddy outpost to a "Garden City" and became a national leader in horticulture. As historian Cathy Jean Maloney writes in *Chicago Gardens: The Early History*:

Chicago's exponential growth serendipitously coincided with the period often called the golden age of American horticulture. During this era, improvements in railroad and automobile travel forever changed the dynamic of market gardening, and as the nation's transportation hub Chicago was in the driver's seat. By necessity, early Chicago horticulturalists became innovators when faced with challenging climate, topography, and soil.

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As Chicago grew, truck farms and greenhouses sprung up along the edges of the city to provide produce for the region. Part of this burgeoning farming community was devoted to growing decorative flowers that were distributed by truck and rail from Chicago to towns and cities across the Midwest and into other regions of the country. Nurseries in the present-day suburbs of Morton Grove, Naperville, Lisle, La Grange, and Arlington Heights cultivated trees, shrubs, and flowers for sale. One of the earliest and most successful among these commercial nurseries was Kennicott's Grove in Glenview, founded by physician and horticulturalist John Kennicott in 1836.

Chicago's wholesale florist industry was a natural outgrowth of the area's rapidly expanding commercial nurseries. In 1881, brothers Amasa and Flint Kennicott founded Kennicott Brothers Company to serve as a wholesale distributor for the fresh flowers produced at "The Grove." The company, the first wholesale florist concern in the Midwest, established itself near the intersection of Randolph Street and Wabash Street in the center of the city. Within a decade, there were over a dozen wholesale florist concerns operating alongside Kennicott. By the late 1890s, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported that the city was "the second largest flower market in the country and the center of the [floral] shipping trade, which extends west to Salt Lake City, north to Winnipeg, east to New York, and as far south as New Orleans. Within a radius of six blocks are some nineteen or twenty wholesale dealers whose yearly business amounts to more than \$900,000."

The growth of the floral market along both sides of Wabash Avenue mimicked, albeit on a much smaller scale, the spontaneous growth of the massive produce market along South Water Street west of Michigan Avenue. Wholesale floral concerns leased space in existing buildings that were not specifically suited to the efficient processing of delicate and highly-perishable cut flowers. Because almost all of the cut flowers sold in the Chicago market were grown within a 50-mile radius of the city, most of the product was transported into the city via wagon and, later, by motorized truck. Although the central location of the market had originally served the vendors well, by the 1920s the constant traffic jams and dilapidated buildings were an impediment to business, and the industry began looking to relocate to a new location with access to better modern facilities and improved shipping and receiving options.

In 1926, a consortium of wholesale and retail floral businesses including Kennicott Brothers Company, Poehlman Brothers Company, J. A. Budlong Company, A. T. Pyfer & Company, and Peter Reinberg, partnered with First Realty Company to construct a purpose-built floral mart that would consolidate the city's most successful and prolific floral concerns under a single roof. First Realty hired the Chicago architectural firm of Fox & Fox, known primarily for their specialized industrial designs, to draw up plans for the building. In January of 1927, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* ran a full-page feature on the building entitled "\$1,000,000 Wholesale Florists' Market for West Side: Loop Flower Firms to Join in Migration." The article stated that "Chicago's florist center, for several decades at the northeast tip of the loop, is to be moved bodily to the west side, where a \$1,000,000 wholesale floral market is to be established...into this new building practically all of the wholesale florists now grouped about the Wabash and Randolph flower center are to move when the building is completed on May 1."

The list of tenants for the new building read like a who's who of Chicago's florist industry and included the Poehlman Brothers, the largest growers of cut flowers in the world with thirty-seven acres of greenhouses in nearby Morton Grove; the American Bulb Company, one of the largest dealers in bulbs in the United States; Joseph Ziska & Sons, a prominent floral supply house; and Kennicott Brothers, the first wholesale florists concern in the region.

The new building, purpose-built to the specifications provided by the future tenants, resolved the problems that hampered business in the old Wabash market. Fox & Fox designed the structure with the latest refrigeration equipment for each wholesaler, large passenger and freight elevators to service all of the tenants, and a twenty-foot shipping platform along the entire length of the rear of the building with direct access for the first



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floor wholesale concerns. The building's location on West Randolph Street in the Near West Side also freed the industry from the snarling congestion of downtown traffic and allowed for efficient transfer of goods from truck to rail. By mid-June, the building was fully occupied. According to *The American Florist*, the new tenants were "more than delighted with the new location." For many of the occupants, the move allowed them to double or triple their floor space. A grand opening was held at the building on June 17, 1927.

The opening of the Wholesale Florist Exchange effectively shifted the center of the florists trade to the Near West Side, and other floral concerns followed suit. In the fall of 1927, the American Bulb Company announced plans to build its own building at Randolph and Ada Streets, just west of the Wholesale Florist Exchange. Company president Abraham Miller cited the "splendid shipping facilities...and accessibility by motor and other modes of transportation... and the close assemblage of wholesalers" as the primary advantages of the company's relocation. The new three-story brick structure, still extant, was also designed by Fox & Fox.

The Near West Side location remained a vital floral market through the post-World War II period. However, the advent of air travel effectively ended the region's dominance in the wholesale cut flower industry. Growers in more temperate states such as California and Florida could easily transport their goods across the country by air. The greenhouses and nurseries along the edges of Chicago were transformed into housing developments, and the city's wholesale florist trade dwindled. By the early 1980s, only two wholesale florists—Kennicott Brothers and Vans' Inc—remained in business at the Wholesale Florist Exchange. Kennicott left the building in 1983.

### *Concrete Industrial Construction in Chicago*

The Wholesale Florists Building is an excellent example of an Art Deco concrete loft building in the city, with primary facades rendered entirely in cast concrete. The building, which utilized the flat slab method of concrete construction popularized by builder C.A.P. Turner in the 1910s and featured delicately rendered cast-concrete Art Deco-style detailing on its primary elevations, exemplifies both the structural and the decorative capabilities of concrete as a building material.

Although the first American patents for reinforced concrete construction date from the late 1860s and the first successful reinforced concrete structure was constructed in 1875, the process was little used in American building until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Chicago, city directories showed no listings for concrete manufacturers until the 1890s, and no companies specializing in concrete construction until 1900. As late as November of 1907, when several important concrete buildings—including the massive Montgomery Ward & Company Catalog House designed by Schmidt, Garden, & Martin and several buildings designed by noted industrial designer and early concrete pioneer Lawrence G. Hallberg—were well under construction, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported that the American Institute of Architects were meeting in Chicago to "thrash out" the "possibilities of reinforced concrete as a building material" and to argue that "a safe concrete, safe enough for the construction of buildings, has been found." By 1909, Chicago newspapers were heralding the beginning of a new "stone age" made possible by concrete.

When architects and engineers began experimenting with the new building material, they primarily utilized concrete construction methods for the structural framework of industrial loft buildings, because it provided uniform and utilitarian open interior spaces that could be used by a wide variety of manufacturing and industrial concerns. These types of businesses often needed to combine assembly operations, storage, office and support functions, machine shops, and a number of other industry-specific uses into a single building. Early loft buildings were constructed using standard mill timber frame systems or a system of wood or metal posts and wood beams supporting a wooden floor. Reinforced concrete structures offered obvious advantages to traditional timber frame buildings, allowing for maximum daylight, better fire resistance, and less vibration.

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Materials for concrete construction—sand, aggregate, and cement—were also readily available and relatively inexpensive.

Reinforced concrete construction utilized one of two basic forms of construction—the beam-and-girder method and the flat-slab method. The beam-and-girder method was a literal interpretation of traditional timber construction, with a system of columns, cross beams, girders, and slab floors. This type of concrete construction was quickly eclipsed by the flat-slab method, which was based on the innovations of Robert Maillart in Europe and C.A.P. Turner in the United States. Flat-slab construction eliminated beams and girders in favor of a flared-top, 'mushroom' column and slab floors that provided higher ceilings, allowed light to penetrate farther into the interior, required less carpentry for formwork, and was generally cheaper than the beam-and-girder method.

While concrete structural systems had become common in Chicago by the 1920s, most of the buildings that utilized this method of construction showed a more conventional outward face, with historical revival-style facades rendered in brick, stone, and terra cotta. Even the most prominent industrial architects in the city—including George C. Nimmons, Schmidt, Garden & Martin, and Alfred S. Alschuler—who utilized concrete in structurally innovative ways for their large factory and warehouse commissions, tempered their designs with these traditional building materials and historicized architectural detailing. In contrast, the Wholesale Florist Exchange featured not only a concrete structure, but concrete facades with cast concrete detailing as well.

Within the Near West Side community, the vast majority of the structures in the industrial district between Madison Street on the south, Kinzie Street on the north, Halsted Street on the east, and Ashland Street on the west are timber frame or concrete frame structures with brick exterior walls. Early concrete structures such as the Chicago Belting Company Building at 113 North Green Street (completed in 1907), the Mutual Drug Company Building at 21 North Green Street (completed in 1901), and the manufacturing building at 825 West Washington Street (completed in 1907) obscured their concrete structural systems with brick walls and traditional details. Both of these buildings have also been extensively altered by conversion into condominiums. In contrast, the Richter's Food Products Building at 1032-1040 West Randolph Street, designed by architect H. Peter Henschien and completed in 1932, is excellently preserved and exemplifies the Art Deco style, but also conceals its modern concrete structure with brick, stone, and terra cotta detailing.

*Fox & Fox Architects & Engineers*

Founded in 1919 by brothers John Jay Fox, Sr. (1889-1959) and William P. Fox (1887-1955), the Chicago architectural and engineering firm of Fox & Fox was best known in the early twentieth century as industrial designers who specialized in automobile garages and small factory buildings. Noteworthy commissions by the firm included multi-story garage buildings at State and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 1025 North Clark Street, 5733-39 Broadway Street, and the Gould Garage at 858 North Clark Street. All of these parking structures were designed with elaborately-detailed facades that gave them the appearance of an occupied building. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* featured a number of these projects with headlines such as "A Garage That Looks Like Something Else;" "Dressing Up a Hostelry for Automobiles;" and "An Automobile Repose." The newspaper's August 19, 1928 article on the Gould Garage described the building as part of a trend "of making garages attractive instead of having them just packing boxes, as was commonly the case hitherto."

Like most architects working in Chicago during the early twentieth century, Fox & Fox's commercial projects were primarily designed in the popular historical revival styles. By the late 1920s, the firm had begun to embrace the more modern Art Deco style. The firm's design for the Montrose Beach Hotel, begun in October of 1928, showed a linear brick façade with projecting vertical piers and geometric detailing rendered in stone. Fox & Fox's design for the Wholesale Florist Exchange incorporated similar elements, but decorated with abstracted floral motifs that directly referenced the building's use.

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The Wholesale Florist Exchange was among the most prominent of the firm's industrial designs. After World War II, Fox & Fox transitioned from industrial and commercial work to primarily ecclesiastical commissions. During the 1950s and 1960s, under the direction of John Jay Fox, Jr., the firm completed designs for dozens of Catholic churches and school buildings for parishes across Chicago and the surrounding suburbs, including the Gate of Heaven church and school (1952) and Christ the King church and school (1953) in Chicago, Queen of Apostles church and school in Riverdale, Joliet Catholic High School (1956), St. Jude's Church in New Lenox (1956), and the \$5.5 million Carmel High School in Mundelein (1961). The firm's close connection to the Catholic Church was confirmed in 1979, when Fox & Fox was chosen to design the altar platform for a papal mass conducted by Pope John Paul II in Grant Park. The firm continues to operate in Chicago under third generation principal John Jay Fox III.

*Conclusion*

The Wholesale Florist Exchange at 1313 West Randolph Street in Chicago meets National Register Criteria A as a reflection of the development of one of the nation's largest wholesale florist markets in the early twentieth century. The building consolidated the largest and most prominent of the city's wholesale florists into a single location and shifted the center of the trade from the Loop to the near West Side. Designed by architecture and engineering firm of Fox & Fox and completed in 1927, the building was purpose-built to provide modern solutions to the problems that had plagued the old and congested floral market at Randolph and Wabash Streets.

The Wholesale Florist Exchange is also locally significant under Criterion C for architecture as an excellent and well-preserved example of an Art Deco cast-in-place concrete loft structure in the city. Fox & Fox's design for the building capitalized on both the structural and the decorative capabilities of concrete, with a flat-slab concrete structural system and fanciful Art Deco-style facades rendered entirely in cast concrete. The building stands today as a reminder of the bustling flower market that once flourished on West Randolph Street.

**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

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"Sheridan Park to See a Bit of Medieval Spain." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 14, 1928, B1.

Slaton, Amy. E. *Reinforced Concrete and the Modernization of American Building, 1900-1930*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press. 2001.

*The Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago*, 1900 and 1910.



**Wholesale Florists Exchange**

Name of Property

**Cook Co., Illinois**

County and State

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

☐ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☒ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

|   |                   |                   |                   |   |                   |                   |                   |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | <u>16</u>         | <u>445297E</u>    | <u>4637080N</u>   | 3 | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> |
|   | Zone              | Easting           | Northing          |   | Zone              | Easting           | Northing          |
| 2 | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> | 4 | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> |
|   | Zone              | Easting           | Northing          |   | Zone              | Easting           | Northing          |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The entire parcel of land associated with the Wholesale Florists Exchange.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries encompass the entire parcel of land associated with the Wholesale Florists Exchange in Chicago, Cook County, IL.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Emily Ramsey  
organization MacRostie Historic Advisors date December 20, 2010  
street & number 53 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 1357 telephone 312-786-1700  
city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60604  
e-mail eramsey@mac-ha.com

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

Wholesale Florists Exchange

Name of Property

Cook Co., Illinois

County and State

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

---

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:**

**City or Vicinity:** Chicago

**County:** Cook

**State:** IL

**Photographer:** Emily Ramsey

**Date Photographed:**

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

---

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name 1313 Randolph Street Partners LLC

street & number 1313 West Randolph Street, Suite 318 telephone 312-229-1200

city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60607

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Wholesale Florists Exchange

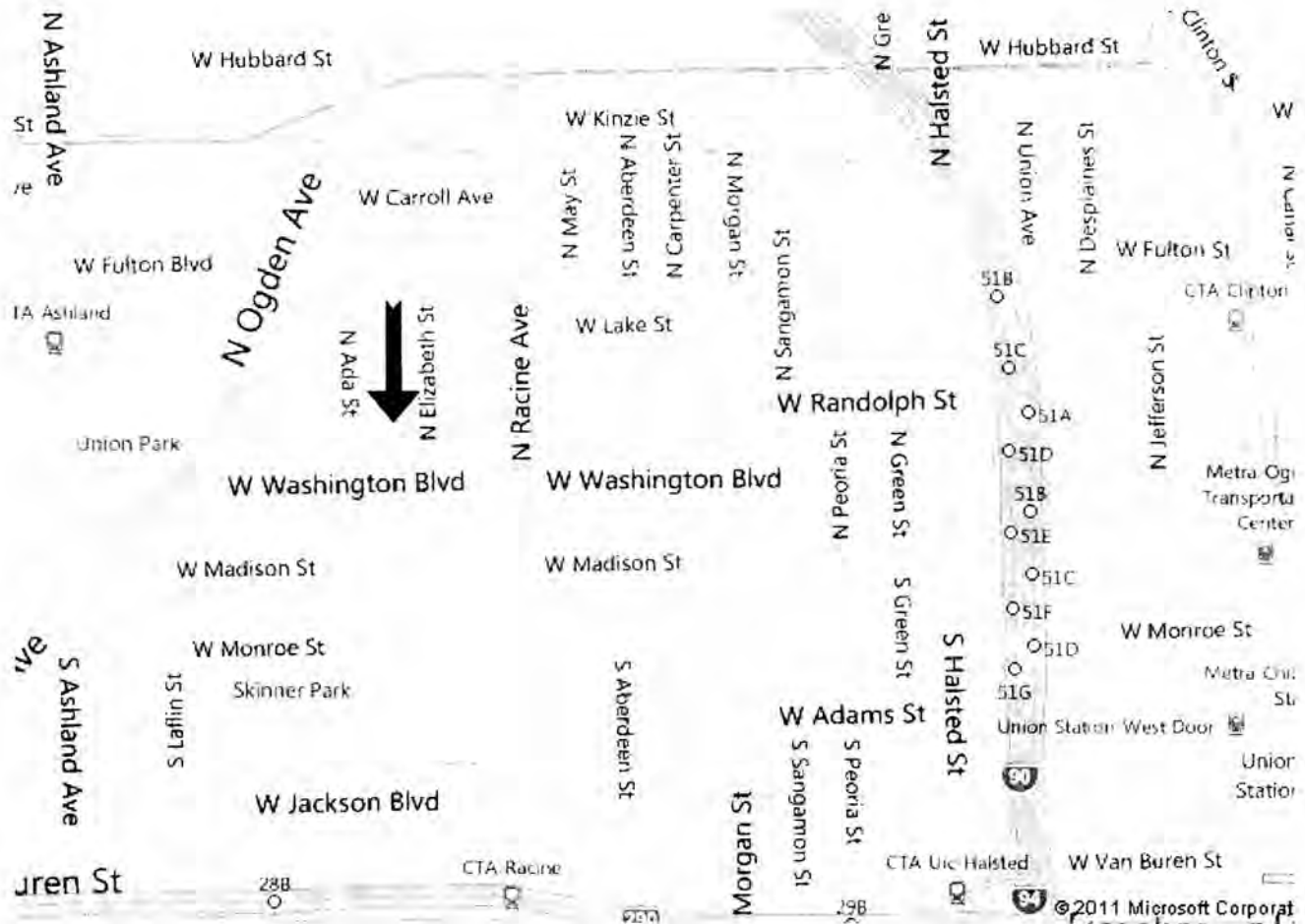
Name of Property

Cook County, IL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Location Map

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

## Wholesale Florists Exchange

Name of Property

Cook County, IL

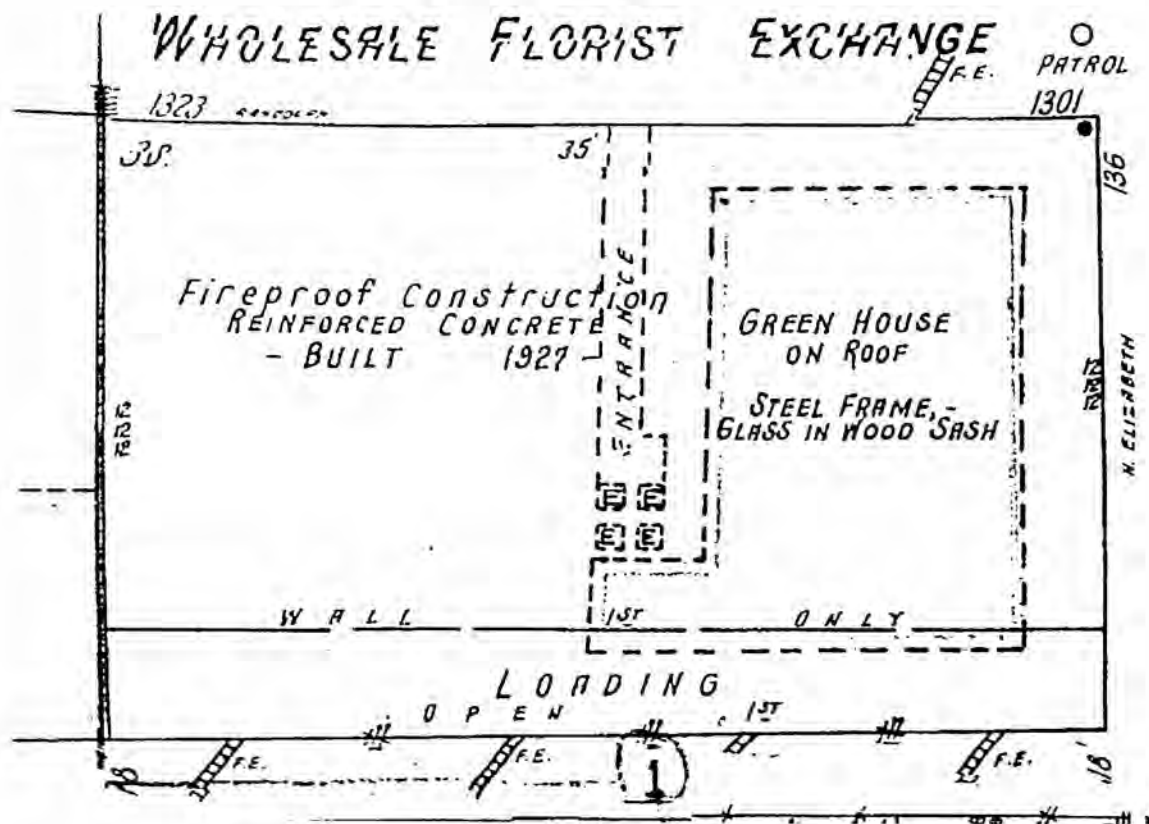
County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps & Images

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Wholesale Florists Exchange from 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Wholesale Florists Exchange

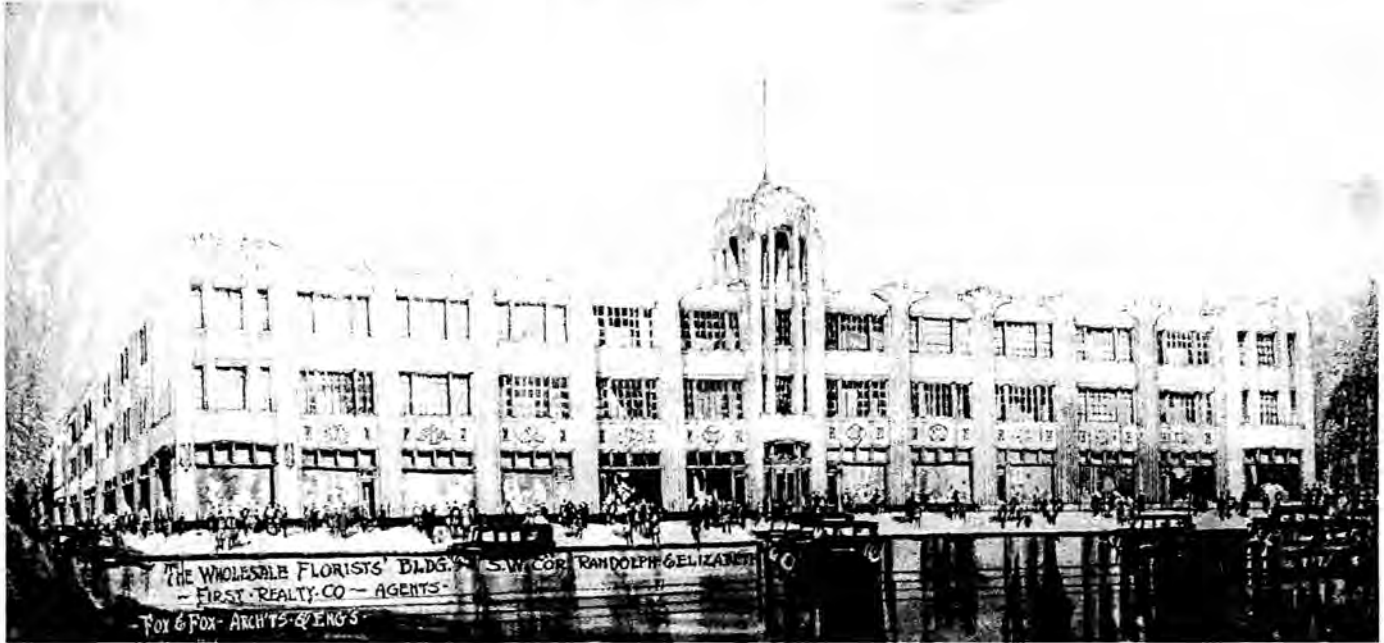
Name of Property

Cook County, IL

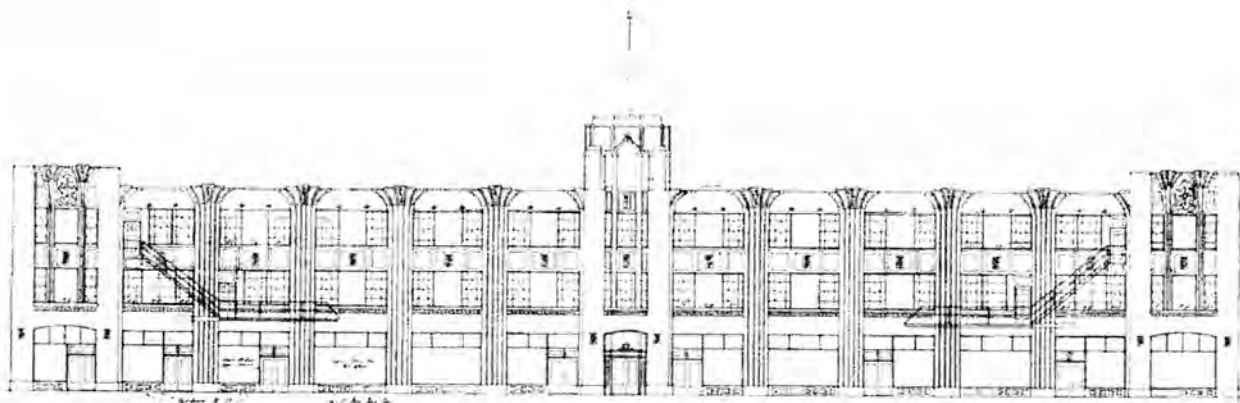
County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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1927 Rendering of Wholesale Florists Exchange



1927 Elevation from Fox & Fox plans

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Wholesale Florists Exchange

Name of Property

Cook County, IL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps & Images

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*Kennicott's passes  
90 years on the go—p21*

Cover of Florist Review showing Red Kennicott in the Wholesale Florist Exchange, 1971  
(courtesy of Kennicott Brothers Company).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Wholesale Florists Exchange

Name of Property

Cook County, IL

County and State

N/A

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Kennicott Brothers employees at the Wholesale Florists Exchange, circa 1930 (photo courtesy of Kennicott Brothers Company)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Wholesale Florists Exchange

Name of Property

Cook County, IL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Tuesday, January 7, 1947



SOUTHWEST CORNER W. RANDOLPH AND N. ELIZABETH STREETS

## First Realty Company Sells Wholesale Florists Building for Half Million Dollars

Buyer is Wholesale Florists Building Corp., composed of the following: Kennicott Bros. Co.; Alex Henderson, Inc.; A. T. Pyfer & Co.; Louis Hoeckner Co.; A. L. Vaughan & Co. and Fred Hild of Hild Floor Machine Co., all of which are tenants in the building.

Article from *Realty & Building News*, announcing sale of Wholesale Florists Exchange in 1947 (courtesy of Kennicott Brothers Company)









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